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ABSTRACT

Grade 10 core French students in the Ottawa and Carleton schools were tested for French language skills to assess the skill level acquired by students at this stage of the French second language program and to investigate the suitability of existing tests. The study involves students at three levels: in general, advanced, and enriched courses, in the 11th year of a program beginning in kindergarten and providing the maximum French language exposure specified in Ontario guidelines. Four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were tested at each course level, and information about student French language background was also collected. Results showed a distinct difference in the performance levels of students at the three course levels, with higher scores often related to longer program participation. Very few sex differences were found except in enriched courses, where a disproportionately small number of boys achieved higher mean scores on some measures. Results also indicated that outside exposure to French, which varied greatly by course level, was related to performance. Further comparisons were made with other secondary grades of the three course levels. (MSE)

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PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

Results of Testing the Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking Skills of Students in the Schools of the Ottawa and Carleton Boards of Education

Part II

Tenth Annual Report, December 1983

F. Morrison: Principal Investigator
M. Wightman: Assistant Research Officer

FL014652

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ABSTRACT

Grade 10 core French students in the Ottawa and Carleton Boards of Education were given several tests of French language skills in the spring of 1983. The purpose of the project was to assess the level of skills which had been acquired by students at this stage of the program of French as a second language, as well as to investigate the suitability of existing tests for these students and to develop new tests if necessary.

The study involves students in general, advanced and enriched level courses. They are enrolled in the eleventh year of a program which begins in kindergarten and, in the Ottawa Board, involves almost the maximum amount of time for core French that is specified in the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines. The program which had been available to this cohort of Carleton Board students consisted of fewer accumulated hours of instruction since only half the maximum time had been given below grade 6.

All four language skills were tested with samples of various sizes from each course level. Established tests were used whenever possible, but it was necessary to develop some new tests and these were modelled on OAIP items. Information about the background experience in French was collected and analyzed for students in the Ottawa Board, whose results were also examined for sex differences.

The results of testing show that there is a distinct difference in the general performance levels of students in the G, A and E courses. On many tests at the same course level students in the board with more hours in the core program have higher mean scores.

When the results of the grade 10 core students are compared to those of other groups, the findings vary somewhat with the instrument used or the skill considered. The G level students achieve mean scores very similar to those of grade 8 core students on several measures and on one test of listening are not different from grade 7 students in a one-year late immersion program. The A level students perform at the same level as grade 7 late immersion students in a two-year program on one test of listening and are less proficient than grade 8 late immersion students in two-year or three-year programs on a reading test. On a listening test the E level students score at the same level as grade 8 students in a two-year late immersion program, grade 9 students in a bilingual program and grade 12 students in A level core French. The grade 10E and grade 8 two-year late immersion students also have similar results on a test of reading.

Very few differences between scores of boys and girls exist except at the enriched level where a disproportionately small number of boys obtain higher mean scores on some measures. The composition of the groups of students in the three course levels is quite different in respect to exposure to the French language outside of the core program and the results indicate that this factor does influence performance.

As well as providing information about the French language skills of several groups of grade 10 core students, it is anticipated that the results of this project will be useful in allowing comparisons with different types of programs and students and in assessing the suitability of instruments for related testing in the future.

PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

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PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

General Background

Although various programs of learning French as a Second Language (FSL) have been introduced into Ontario schools in the last 10 to 15 years, the majority of students are still enrolled in the basic or Core French Program. Within each school board the core program offers the least amount of French instruction of the FSL programs available, but many characteristics of core French vary from one board to another depending on local conditions and needs. All the core programs are obliged to fall within the broad limits outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education guideline, French, Core Programs 1980. As specified in this document the core program may begin anywhere between kindergarten and grade 9 and include from 60 to 120 hours of instruction each year (or 20 to 40 minutes each day). Until the present time courses in French in high school have been optional. This flexibility has resulted in considerable variation among Ontario students in the amount of FSL instruction received by the end of their schooling.

The influence of the time factor in second language learning is still a subject of much discussion among the experts in this field. In a recent review of the literature related to this topic (Stern, 1982), it is stated that time cannot be considered apart from other factors such as age, state of proficiency, and teaching methods. Although the aims of the Core French Program in Ontario schools are available in the above-mentioned Ministry guideline, there is also interest in obtaining concrete measures of performance levels which can be expected with core

programs of various intensities. This is particularly true in the greater Ottawa area where the considerable interest in French language learning has resulted in the local boards of education expanding the time allotted the core programs to almost the specified maximum as well as introducing several variations of immersion and bilingual programs.

Since 1973, contracts between the Ministry and the Ottawa Board of Education (OBE) Research Centre have allowed the testing of core French students in the local programs at the elementary grades. Very limited testing has been conducted in high schools, however, and the 1983 contract with the Ministry included a study of achievement of students in grade 10. Testing was to take place in the spring of 1983. The objectives were to obtain an impression of the language skills acquired by various groups of grade 10 core French students, as well as to make comparisons with results obtained at other grade levels of the core program or in other French programs. A secondary purpose of the project was to determine the suitability of available tests and to develop new instruments if necessary. Of special interest in constructing new tests was the use of items modelled on the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (OAIP) for French (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1980b).

Programs and Groups Studied

The studies of alternative programs of French conducted since 1973 by the OBE Research Centre and supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education (the FRENCH Project) have involved students in two neighbouring boards of education, Ottawa and Carleton. The Core French Programs in these boards have developed independently, each with its own curriculum and schedule of program expansions.

In 1972, the Ottawa Board of Education entered a five year period of gradually doubling the instruction time in grades 1 to 8 core French from 20 to 40 minutes daily. At the end of this transition the increased time for these grades was equivalent to 120 hours each year, which is the maximum in the range for kindergarten to grade 8 outlined in the Ministry guideline. The OBE kindergarten students also doubled their daily instructional time from 15 to 30 minutes, making this the only grade level with less than the 40 minute maximum in daily time. At about the same time, the neighbouring Carleton Board of Education (CBE) began to expand its Core French Program at the higher elementary grade levels. For several years the daily instructional time in kindergarten was 15 minutes, in grades 1 to 5 was 20 minutes and in grades 6 to 8 was 40 minutes. In 1979 the core program in the Carleton Board was again changed so that pupils in grades 1 to 5 also receive 40 minutes of French instruction daily, and kindergarten pupils receive 30 minutes. In the high schools offering academic programs in both boards, core French courses are offered at three levels of difficulty: general, advanced and enriched (or G, A and E). Each of these courses is considered to be of 110 hours duration for the school year.

Table 1 provides an outline of the number of hours of French available to students in the Ottawa and Carleton Boards of Education who were in grade 10 in the spring of 1983. This is given for the Core French Program, as well as the Early-entry French Immersion (EFI) and Late-entry French Immersion (LFI) Programs. It can be seen that although the OBE core French students have been exposed at almost every grade level to the maximum possible number of instructional hours, the CBE students who were in grade 10 in 1982-83 had received only half this amount before grade 6.

TABLE 1

HOURS OF FRENCH INSTRUCTION FOR GRADE 10 STUDENTS
IN OTTAWA AND CARLETON CORE AND IMMERSION FRENCH PROGRAMS,
1982-83

Grade	Ottawa Board		Carleton Board	
	Hours of French	Cumulative hours	Hours of French	Cumulative hours
Core French Program				
K	90	90	45	45
1	120	210	60	105
2	120	330	60	165
3	120	450	60	225
4	120	570	60	285
5	120	690	60	345
6	120	810	120	465
7	120	930	120	585
8	120	1050	120	705
9	110	1160	110	815
10	110	1270	110	925
Late-Entry Immersion				
K	90	90	45	45
1	120	210	60	105
2	120	330	60	165
3	120	450	60	225
4	120	570	60	285
5	120	690	60	345
6	900	1590	120	465
7	450	2040	720	1185
8	450	2490	720	1905
9		110 hours per course in French		
10		110 hours per course in French		
Early-Entry Immersion				
K	450	450	450	450
1	900	1350	900	1350
2	720	2070	720	2070
3	720	2790	720	2790
4	720	3510	675	3465
5	720	4230	585	4050
6	450	4680	450	4500
7	450	5130	450	4950
8	450	5580	450	5400
9		110 hours per course in French		
10		110 hours per course in French		

Findings of Previous Studies of the Programs

Some of the earlier studies of the core French students in the Ottawa and Carleton boards focused on the effects of the differing amounts of instruction time (Morrison, Bonyun and Pawley, 1981). The general findings showed that greater amounts of cumulative time did lead to increased skills in listening comprehension. These results were based on the comparison of groups from the two boards although there was one opportunity to make within-board contrasts. In 1981 in the Carleton Board a similar finding was based on results for the same junior grade level from two consecutive years of testing in which the program of the students had changed from 20 to 40 minutes of French instruction daily. Throughout these studies, when students at different grade levels who had received the same amount of French instruction were compared, the older students obtained the higher mean scores.

Another result of the studies of alternate programs at the elementary grade levels was that students in an 'expanded' French program, that is studying core French plus another subject in French, obtained higher scores in listening comprehension than students with the same and sometimes higher number of hours of instruction in the core program only. It was not certain to what extent this effect was due to the possible higher ability of the expanded program students, the recency of a large part of the cumulative time or the effect of studying a subject through the medium of French.

The investigations of elementary level core French students included consideration of language background and sex (Morrison, Bonyun and Pawley, 1981). It was found that the background of students covers a broad spectrum at the higher grade levels and that in most cases this

experience is shown to have an effect on test scores. Studies of sex differences from grades 4 to 8 frequently showed a significantly higher performance level for girls. All of the results cited above were based primarily on tests of listening comprehension. Some speaking tests were also administered but the results were not so conclusive in respect to these issues.

At the high school level very little testing of Core French Programs had been done prior to 1983 in the Ottawa-Carleton region (or elsewhere in the province). As part of a study of the effects of class size conducted in 1975, listening comprehension tests were given to grade 10 core French students and the results showed no significant difference for the variable in question (Morrison et al, 1976). In 1978, as part of the FRENCH Project, students in grade 12 were given a listening comprehension and a cloze (story completion) test (Morrison et al, 1978). On the basis of the listening test results it was estimated that only some of the E level students were likely to have the language skills required for a bilingual position in the Federal Public Service. In 1979, in a board-sponsored project, several tests were given to OBE grade 12 students in G and A level courses for an investigation of curriculum content and relative performance levels within the board (Comtois and Picard, 1979). The resulting recommendations touched on curriculum content, materials, teaching methods and evaluation procedures. In all these studies, the students involved in the testing followed a 20 minute core French program until entering high school, so that they had received a total of about 1000 hours of instruction by the end of grade 12. This is considerably less than the 1490 hours which will have been accumulated by OBE students at the

leading edge of the expanded core program by the time they finish grade 12 in 1984 and also less than the 1270 hours accumulated by the grade 10 core French students who were tested in the spring of 1983.

Instruments

One of the early tasks in the project was to search for tests which might be suitable for grade 10 core French students in the Ottawa area. Once such tests were identified all results from previous uses were assembled and considered in the selection process along with the content and other characteristics. For some areas of testing, suitable instruments were not found and this resulted in new instruments being adapted from OAIP material.

The tests finally used in this project are given in Table 2 along with a brief description of their content. They cover the four language skills, are drawn from a variety of sources and provide a means of comparing the performances of the grade 10 core students with other groups. The IEA tests of listening and the reading and cloze tests developed by OISE have been employed in other studies and are familiar to those interested in FSL testing in Ontario. Previous uses of the OBE French Comprehension Test (Subtest C) and many parts of the OBE French Speaking Test, 1983 indicated that these instruments would be appropriate for the grade 10 core students. Being used for the first time in this project was the material based on OAIP found in the OBE French Reading and Writing Test, the OBE French Writing Test and many parts of the OBE French Speaking Test, 1983. The original OAIP material was directed towards use in grades 6 and 10 and the items adapted for this project were reviewed by the OBE Consultant responsible for the program under study and judged to be suitable.

In contrast to the group tests of listening comprehension, reading and writing, the test of speaking was administered to students on an individual basis. Each student tested for speaking was given only one of the three parts of the test. The time allocations indicated in Table 2 for each test were adhered to very precisely for the group tests which were administered by testers trained for this project. In the case of the speaking test, however, the 12 minutes indicated in the table is only an estimate of the time required to test each student. These testers, who had received additional training and were fluently bilingual, did not impose a time limit so that the actual test time was flexible depending on the pace set by the student.

TABLE 2

TESTS USED WITH GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, OTTAWA AND CARLETON, SPRING 1983

Name of test	Abbreviation used	Source	Description	Maximum Score
OBE French Comprehension Test (Subtest C)	OBE L.C.	Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre	A 55-item multiple-choice listening test, based on the OBE curriculum, was developed for grade 8 core students and first administered in 1982. (40 mins)	55
French Listening Test, Population II and French Listening Test, Population IV	IEA II and IEA IV	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement: Study of French as a Foreign Language	Both IEA II and IEA IV are 40-item multiple-choice listening comprehension tests used in several countries. IEA II was designed for use with 14-year-old students who had taken two or three years of standard French courses. IEA IV was designed for students in their final year of high school who had taken at least three years of French. (25 mins)	40
Test de compréhension de l'écrit, niveau B, revisé 1979	OISE-B	Bilingual Education Project at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)	This is a 22-item multiple-choice reading test consisting of short newspaper articles, advertisements, excerpts from stories, etc. (35 mins)	22
Test de mots à trouver, nive u C	Cloze	Bilingual Education Project at OISE	This test is a passage from which every seventh word has been deleted. Students must fill in the deleted words. (25 mins)	50

. . . cont.

TABLE 2, cont.

Name of test	Abbreviation used	Source	Description	Maximum score
OBE French Reading and Writing Test	OBE R & W	Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre	This test was modelled on items from the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool. For the writing component, testees are required to write sentences in French based on given illustrations. To test reading, students use English to answer questions about material written in French. (35 mins)	87
OBE French Writing Test	OBE Writing	Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre	This test was composed of two questions similar to those found in OAIP. One of these was also included in the OBE French Reading and Writing Test. (15 mins)	60
OBE French Speaking Test, 1983	OBE Speaking	Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre	The test was made up of selected sections of a longer test developed for use with grade 6 core students, part of an instrument developed for testing the use of grammatical structures by immersion students, and some items modelled on OAIP material. The test was divided into three units and each student is tested on only one of these. (Approximately 12 mins/unit)	Total score not used.

Sampling Design

The procedures used in drawing the samples of students to be tested were different for the two school boards involved in this study. At the 15 high schools offering core French courses in the Ottawa Board of Education, each grade 10 class was given two of the seven tests in the areas of listening, reading and writing. As outlined in Table 3, all students in each of the three levels of the program had at least one test in common. That is, all G level students took the OBE French Comprehension Test, all A level students took the OISE-B Reading Test and all E level students took the IEA IV French Listening Test. For the second test at the G and A level, the classes were divided approximately into thirds, each third receiving a different second test. An attempt was made to use all the assigned tests in each school and to maintain a balance among the number of classes receiving each test. At the G level the tests given to about one third of the classes were the IEA II French Listening Test, the OISE-B Reading Test and the OBE French Reading and Writing Test. For the second testing period at the A level the tests used were the OBE French Comprehension Test, the IEA IV French Listening Test and, given together in one classroom period, the OBE French Writing Test and the OISE Cloze C Test. Since there were relatively few E level students, all received the same tests which for the second testing period were the OBE French Writing Test and the OISE Cloze C Test. This design was implemented so that comparisons could be made among students and classes within levels, across levels and across programs.

TABLE 3

OUTLINE OF TESTING FOR
OTTAWA GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, SPRING 1983

Test	G Level	A Level	E Level
OBE French Comprehension Test	All students	Sample d	
IEA II French Listening Test	Sample a		
IEA IV French Listening Test		Sample e	All students
OISE B Reading Test	Sample b	All students	
OBE French Reading and Writing Test	Sample c		
OBE French writing Test OISE Cloze C		Sample f	All students
OBE French Speaking Test, 1983	Random sample Units 2 & 3	Random sample Units 1,2 & 3	Random sample Unit 1
Total number of students tested	415	717	102

Due to restrictions of time and resources a similar design was not implemented in the Carleton Board of Education. Instead, the Head of the French Department in each high school was told about the project and given the choice of being included or not. In seven of the four-

teen eligible high schools it was decided to have testing conducted and the extent and choice of tests varied from school to school. Thus the sample was somewhat self-selected although it does appear to be quite representative of the board as a whole.

The speaking test was given to a randomly selected fifty per cent sample of the grade 10 core French students in 12 schools, half belonging to each board. In the Ottawa Board of Education six schools were selected on the basis of providing a representative subpopulation of the board as a whole and also avoiding schools where extensive testing was known to be occurring in other subjects. In the Carleton Board of Education six of the seven department heads who opted for testing asked to have the speaking test included in their schedules.

French Language Background Questionnaire

Students taking core French in the Ottawa area are known to have had earlier contacts with the French language which are varied and diverse (e.g. see Wightman, 1982b, page 17). While some have only recently begun studying French with their arrival in local schools, others have spent several years in immersion programs or even come from homes in which French is the mother tongue. In order to relate the results of the testing to the language experience, students in grade 10 core French classes of the Ottawa Board of Education were asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their previous studies and contacts with French. Also on the questionnaire was space for teachers to copy the number of hours the student was reported to have spent in French programs from the Student Record of Accumulated Instruction in FSL retained in each school for the Ministry (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1982, page 3).

Using the information provided on the questionnaire students were first classified according to 13 categories. Since many of these categories contained only a few students and frequently the number of hours attributed to a student was only an estimate, the 13 categories were collapsed to give five general background groups used for most of the analyses. Table 4 gives an outline of the French-related experience of students in each group and category.

TABLE 4

GROUPINGS AND CATEGORIES OF CORE FRENCH STUDENTS
BASED ON THEIR FRENCH LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Groups		Categories		
No.	Description	No.	Hrs. of Fr.	Description or Example
1	Experience in a French milieu	1	N/A	French spoken at home or attended a French school
		2	N/A	Other extensive experience in French
2	Taught more French than in a core program while attending English schools	3	over 4999	Over 6 years of EFI
		4	3500-4999	5-6 years of EFI
		5	2000-3499	2-4 years of EFI or 2 years of LFI
		6	1420-1999	Extra French beyond core program
3	8-11 years of core French including Kindergarten	7	1180-1419	10-11 years core French (from gr. 1 or K)
		8	940-1179	8-9 years core French (from gr. 2 or 3)
4	Less than 8 years of core French	9	700-939	6-7 years core French (from gr. 4 or 5)
		10	460-699	4-5 years core French (from gr. 6 or 7)
		11	220-459	2-3 years core French (from gr. 8 or 9)
		12	less than 220	less than 2 years of core French
5	Uncertain background in French	13	N/A	Uncertain

RESULTS

In this part of the report the results are considered first for the three listening tests, next for the four tests involving reading and writing, and finally for the speaking test. Each section is introduced with an overview of the findings followed by a more detailed discussion of individual test results. The mean scores attained by the grade 10 core French groups are given in tables which also contain the mean scores of other groups who have been given the same test. Associated with each group's record is the number of hours of French instruction its members would have normally received by the end of the year of testing.

The difference in the time allotted to the Core French Program in the two boards is outlined in Table 1 on page 4. As shown on the bottom line of the section for the core program in Table 1, a student who has been in the OBE Core French Program since kindergarten would have accumulated 1270 hours of French instruction by the end of grade 10 whereas in the CBE program only 925 hours of instruction would have been received. It should be noted, however, that the annual amount of instruction in French in the two boards has actually been the same from grade 6 through grade 10.

A comparison of the two types of programs on the results reported here would be extremely tenuous, however, for the following reasons. First, as mentioned in the previous section, a random sampling procedure was not used in the Carleton Board of Education. Secondly, no information was obtained from CBE students about the number of years they have actually spent in the Core French Program or about other opportu-

ities they have had to learn French. However, the CBE results are based on the performances of about half the students taking grade 10 core French in CBE schools in the spring of 1983. In this sense they are believed to give a general picture of the skills of the CBE grade 10 students, as is obtained by this study for the OBE students.

In some tables mean scores have been included for high school groups following a bilingual program which is usually a sequel to the early or late immersion programs given in the elementary grades. The number of courses taken by these students in high school varies considerably, even within a class, so that the number of cumulative hours of French given in the table is usually an estimate of the figure which would best represent the experience of the majority of the students. Whenever possible a label is used for the group indicating the type of program represented such as 'grade 12 5 year LFI' for students who started immersion in grade 8 or 'grade 10 EFI cont' for students who had followed an Early-entry Immersion Program and are continuing to receive a substantial amount of course instruction in French.

When groups of students are compared, unless an exception is noted, differences between mean scores are tested for significance using the Student's t distribution and reported at two levels, $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$. When mean differences are reported to be non-significant the larger p value is assumed so that there is a 95 per cent chance or likelihood that the statement is correct and the groups are not really different on the measure being considered.

The presentation which follows is based on the results of all the students tested in their particular level of the Core French Program. In a later section of this report the differences related to students' backgrounds in French are considered for OBE students.

Listening Comprehension

The three tests of French listening comprehension given to grade 10 core French students in the spring of 1983 were the OBE French Comprehension Test and the IEA French Listening Test for populations II and IV. The results of these tests show the expected ranking of the three course levels, with the A level students exhibiting more highly developed listening skills than the G level students and less well developed skills than the E level students. Comparisons betwen grade 10 core groups from the two boards show that at the G and A levels the OBE students who have had more instructional time in French have higher mean scores on the tests of listening comprehension. No such difference was found between the two E level groups. When comparing the OBE grade 10 core French students with other groups on the IEA listening tests, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the grade 10G group and grade 7 students at the end of their first year in immersion, between the OBE grade 10A group and grade 7 students at the end of their second year in immersion and between the grade 10E group and CBE grade 8 students at the end of their second year in immersion. The grade 10E students also perform at about the same level as the grade 12A core French students. On the listening test based on the OBE grade 8 curriculum the mean score of the OBE grade 8 group was not significantly different from the OBE grade 10G group but was higher than the CBE grade 10G group and lower than the grade 10A groups in both boards.

The three listening tests with related data are described more completely in the following paragraphs and a more detailed report is presented in Working Paper 156 (Wightman, 1984a).

The OBE French Comprehension Test (Subtest C). This test was developed in 1982 and is based on the OBE core French curriculum to the end of grade 8. It consists of 55 multiple-choice questions divided into four sections involving (1) comprehension of sentences, (2) recognizing the time of action of verbs, (3) discrimination of sounds and (4) understanding passages and conversations. The test is played from a cassette recording. A more comprehensive description of the test as well as a discussion of the results from testing grade 8 core French students in 1982 is available as a research report (Wightman, 1982b).

The results for each group which has received this test are given in Table 5. Within both boards, the difference between the mean scores of the A and the G level groups is significant ($p < 0.01$). Comparing the grade 10 groups across boards, there is a significant difference at both the G and A level with the OBE groups obtaining the higher mean scores. The mean score of the OBE grade 10G level students is not significantly different from that of the grade 8 students tested in either 1982 or 1983. The CBE grade 10G level students have a lower mean score which is significantly different ($p < 0.01$) from those of the grade 8 groups. The larger standard deviations for the grade 8 students, as shown in Table 5, probably reflect a wider range of performance levels which tend to appear when no ability groupings are formed.

A reliability coefficient was calculated using the Kuder-Richardson formula for each group who have taken this test. The coefficient was 0.87 for both the grade 8 groups, 0.83 for both the grade 10A groups, 0.81 for the OBE grade 10G group and 0.72 for the CBE grade 10G group.

TABLE 5

OBE FRENCH COMPREHENSION TEST (SUBTEST C) RESULTS, 1982-1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=55)	SD	N
8	OBE	Core	1050	1982	32.8	8.9	1209[a]
			1050	1983	33.1	8.8	1251[a]
10	CBE	Core G	925	1983	30.3	6.0	136[b]
		Core A	925	1983	39.4	6.9	137[c]
	OBE	Core G	1270	1983	32.4	7.2	399[c]
		Core A	1270	1983	42.0	6.6	234[b]

a Mean is significantly different from the means of the CBE grade 10G group and both grade 10A groups ($p < 0.01$).

b Mean is significantly different from the mean of the other grade 10 group in the same board ($p < 0.01$).

c Mean is significantly different from the mean of the grade 10 group at the same course level in the other board ($p < 0.01$).

The IEA II French Listening Test. This 40-item multiple-choice listening comprehension test has been used for many years in testing French language programs in the Ottawa area. A description of the contents of the test and the results from each use by the FRENCH Project is included in Working Paper 156 (Wightman, 1984a).

In 1983, this test was given to eight of the 27 grade 10G classes in OBE schools. The mean score of this group is 24.0 as shown in Table 6 along with a selection of other results on this test. Not included in Table 6 because the small samples cannot be assumed representative are the 1983 results from the Carleton Board for two G level classes (mean = 20.3, SD = 4.7, N = 29) and two A level classes (mean = 25.3, SD = 5.6, N = 49). The Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient for the test based on the results of the OBE grade 10G group is 0.84.

In contrast to the results on the OBE French Comprehension Test, the mean score of the OBE grade 10G students on the IEA II listening test is larger than that of the OBE grade 8 core French group (mean of 19.8 based on two years' results) and the difference is significant ($p < 0.01$). The grade 8 core students may have performed relatively better on the OBE French Comprehension Test because it was based on the OBE grade 8 curriculum giving them an advantage they did not have on the IEA II test. The OBE grade 8 core group has a higher mean score on the IEA II test than the CBE grade 8 core group (difference is significant, $p < 0.01$) which had received fewer hours of instruction.

TABLE 6

SELECTED IEA II FRENCH LISTENING TEST RESULTS, 1974-1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=40)	SD	N
6	CBE	Core	465	1981	15.9	5.8	645*
	OBE	Core	810	1981	17.0	6.1	539*
7	CBE	Core	585	1981	16.3	5.9	576*
	OBE	Core	930	1981	18.4	6.3	489*
8	CBE	Core	705	1980-1981	18.5	6.0	856*#
	OBE	Core	1050	1980-1981	19.8	7.1	647*
10	OBE	Core G	1270	1983	24.0	6.2	113
7	OBE	1 yr LFI	855	1974-1975	24.7	6.4	170
6	OBE	1 yr LFI	1245	1974-1976	26.4	5.3	319*
7	CBE	1 yr LFI	1125	1974-1976	29.5	5.7	241*
3	ORCSSB	French		1974	25.3	7.2	61
4	ORCSSB	French		1974	29.3	6.4	106*
5	ORCSSB	French		1974	32.1	4.3	60*

* Mean is significantly different from the mean of the OBE grade 10G group ($p < 0.01$).

\# There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the OBE and CBE core students in grade 8.

The mean of the OBE grade 10G students does not differ significantly from the combined mean (24.7) of two years' results for the OBE grade 7 students with only one year of LFI (50 per cent French program). The combined mean of three years' results of the OBE grade 6 late immersion students (26.4) and the CBE grade 7 late immersion students (29.5) are both significantly different ($p < 0.01$) from the smaller mean of the grade 10G core students. Also reported in Table 6 are results on the IEA II listening test which were available for grade 3 to 5 students attending local schools of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (ORCSSB) where French is the language of instruction. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the grade 3 students from this group and that of the OBE grade 10G students. Since the age of the two groups is so different, however, it would be unwise to claim their French listening skills are the same. Other factors which change with maturity must also be expected to have an influence on these group scores.

The IEA IV French Listening Test. This listening test is very similar in content to the parallel IEA test for population II described in the previous section. In fact, of the 40 items contained in each test, there are 19 in common to both. A description of items in the IEA listening tests and of the findings based on their use in this project may be found in Working Paper 156 (Wightman, 1984a).

In 1983, the IEA IV test of listening comprehension was given to all E level students and about one third of the A level students in the Ottawa Board and to almost as many A and E level students in the Carleton Board. The Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients based on

the four groups of grade 10 core French students ranged from 0.83 to 0.86. The mean scores for these groups and a selection of other groups from the same boards who have taken this test is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7

SELECTED IEA IV FRENCH LISTENING TEST RESULTS, 1975-1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=40)	SD	N
10	CBE	Core A	925	1983	19.9	6.4	244[a,b]
		Core E	925	1983	27.1	6.4	62[e]
10	OBE	Core A	1270	1983	22.9	7.0	226[a]
		Core E	1270	1983	28.9	6.1	94
7	OBE	2 yr LFI	1795	1975-1977	23.9	7.0	142[c]
8	OBE	2 yr LFI	1855	1975-1976	25.0	6.5	79[d]
	OBE	3 yr LFI	2145	1976-1977	27.2	5.7	120[d]
	CBE	2 yr LFI	1845	1975-1976	27.3	6.7	132[d,e]
12	OBE	Core A	1085	1979	27.6	7.1	949[d,e]
9	OBE	Bi-hi	1415	1976	29.5	5.4	64[e]

a Mean is significantly different from the mean of the group in the same grade and board but other course level ($p < 0.01$).

b Mean is significantly different from the mean of the group in the same grade and course level but in the other board ($p < 0.01$).

c Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the OBE grade 10A group.

d Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the CBE grade 10E group.

e Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the OBE grade 10E group.

Looking first at the results of testing core French students it can be seen that within both boards in grade 10 there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the A and E level groups ($p < 0.01$). Comparing across boards the difference is not significant between the mean scores of the E level students but is significant between the mean scores of the A level students ($p < 0.01$) where the OBE group has the higher score. Both groups of grade 10E students have mean scores which are not significantly different from that of the grade 12A students tested in 1979.

Including consideration of all means in Table 7, the OBE grade 10A students are seen to perform close to the same level as the three cohorts of late French immersion students tested in 1975, 1976 and 1977 at the end of grade 7. These grade 7 students had an overall mean of 23.9 which is not significantly different from the mean of 22.9 of the OBE grade 10A students but is significantly different ($p < 0.01$) from the mean of 19.9 of the corresponding CBE students. All the other immersion and the bilingual high school groups reported in Table 7 have a higher mean score on this listening test than the OBE grade 10A level students (differences are significant, $p < 0.05$).

The OBE grade 10E students have a mean score of 28.9 which is not significantly different from the highest score reported in Table 7, that of 29.5 for a group of grade 9 bilingual high school students tested in 1976, or from the mean of 27.3 for one of the grade 8 late immersion groups. The scores of all other non-core groups are significantly different from that of the OBE grade 10E level students. The mean score of the grade 9 bilingual high school students is significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from the lower scoring grade 10E students

in the Carleton Board whose mean score of 27.1 is not significantly different from any of the three grade 8 late immersion groups listed in Table 7.

The IEA II and IEA IV listening tests had 19 items in common and the per cent of correct responses for this group of items was assembled for each of the three levels of grade 10 students in the two boards. These percentage means for each of the six groups are shown in Table 8. In both boards, these means are very evenly spaced across the three course levels. Based on the common items of the two IEA tests the average level of listening skills again appears to be quite distinct for the three levels with the performance of the A level groups roughly mid-way between the other two in this skill area.

TABLE 8

MEAN SCORES OF 19 ITEMS COMMON TO THE IEA II AND IEA IV TESTS OF LISTENING FOR GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Board	Overall per cent correct for students in		
	G level	A level	E level
OBE	54.7 (N=113)	69.2 (N=226)	84.3 (N=94)
CBE	44.4 (N=29)	60.1 (N=293)	76.9 (N=62)

Reading and Writing

The results of testing reading and writing are considered in this section of the report, since both these skills were being measured by two of the tests used in 1983, the OISE Level C Cloze Test and the OBE French Reading and Writing Test. The other two tests in this category are the OISE-B Reading Test and the OBE French Writing Test.

The results on the reading and writing measures are quite distinct for the G, A and E level students as was the case for the listening skills. There is some evidence that the grade 10 core French groups in the Ottawa Board, with the larger amount of instructional time, have better skills in writing at the G level and in reading and writing at the A level than the Carleton Board students. Sufficient data are not available to make such a comparison between E level groups.

When data available on other core French students who have taken the OISE Level C Cloze Test is examined, the OBE grade 10E group appears to be as proficient as a group of grade 12E students who have had fewer hours of instruction. The skills of the grade 10A students fall between those of a grade 12G group and a grade 12A group in the same cohort. On the OISE-B Reading Test, the OBE grade 10G students have a mean score which is not significantly different from mean scores of two small groups of grade 11 and 12 core French students in Peel County schools who have taken French only in high school. On the same test, grade 8 late immersion students have mean scores which are not significantly different from those of the grade 10E students, but larger than those of the grade 10A students.

The results obtained on the four tests of reading and writing by the grade 10 core French students tested in 1983 are reported in

Working Paper 157 (Wightman, 1984b) in more detail than is included in the following section.

The OISE-B Reading Test. This test consists of 10 passages, each followed by multiple-choice questions. The passages include such material as newspaper articles, a television guide, advertisements and a poem. The present 22-item test, first used in 1979 with grade 8 immersion students, is a shorter version of the 30-item test of the same name used for several years before the revision was made.

In 1983, the OISE-B Reading Test was administered to all tenth grade A level classes and to about one third of the G level classes in the Ottawa Board. In the Carleton Board 17 of the 20 A level classes and two of the three E level classes involved in the project wrote this test. The other Ottawa-area students to have received this version of the test were in grade 8 immersion French and were tested in 1979. The two late-entry immersion programs represented by the grade 8 groups are one with 100 per cent French instruction in grade 6 followed by 50 per cent in grades 7 and 8 in the Ottawa Board and one with 80 per cent French instruction in both grades 7 and 8 in the Carleton Board.

The results for all the Ottawa and Carleton groups which have taken the revised version of the OISE-B Reading Test are shown in Table 9 which also includes some results for core French students in Peel County (Lapkin, Swain, Kamin and Hanna, 1983). The maximum possible score is 22 and the means of the four grade 10 core French groups range from a low of 32 per cent to a high of 54 per cent of the maximum, indicating that most of the grade 10 core French students found this test difficult. Within these grade 10 groups, the CBE E level students have

the largest mean score followed in order by the OBE A level students, the CBE A level students and the OBE G level students. The differences between all these mean scores are significant ($p < 0.01$, except $p < 0.05$ for the difference between 11.8 for CBE grade 10E and 10.6 for OBE grade 10A). The mean score of the grade 10G students is not significantly different from the scores of the grade 11 and 12 core students in Peel County whose course level was not reported with the means but who have had fewer hours of instruction. Each group of grade 8 immersion students has a larger mean score (the differences are significant, $p < 0.01$) than all the grade 10 core French groups with the exception of the CBE E level group whose mean score was not significantly different from the scores of either of the late immersion groups.

The responses of the grade 10 core students to each item on the OISE-B Reading Test were examined to better understand the students' performance on this test. On almost all items, each of the three incorrect answers attracted a substantial number of responses. This may be taken as an indication that the alternate answers were well balanced as distractors. However, when the percentage of students choosing the correct answer is low, this distribution of incorrect responses may also indicate that students are often guessing. The discrimination indices for the OBE groups of grade 10 core French students were also examined and compared as described in Working Paper 157 (Wightman, 1984b). Their values vary considerably between the two groups and suggest that the test is not suitable for the G level students. The Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients calculated for each of the four grade 10 core groups tested in 1983 were 0.57 for the CBE grade 10E, 0.54 for CBE grade 10A, 0.64 for OBE grade 10A and 0.38 for OBE

grade 10G. The low value for the G students reenforces the impression that the test is not suitable for this group. Although these reliability coefficients have been reduced somewhat by the relatively small number of items on the test, it does appear that the OISE-B Reading Test is not as reliable for the grade 10 core students as are the tests of listening.

TABLE 9

OISE-B FRENCH READING TEST (REVISED 1979) RESULTS, 1979-1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=22)	SD	N
10	Peel	Core	360	1979	5.1	2.5	24
11	Peel	Core	480	1979	7.1	2.3	15[a]
12	Peel	Core	600	1979	8.0	2.2	15[a]
10	OBE	Core G	1270	1983	7.1	2.6	153
		Core A	1270	1983	10.6	3.5	678[b]
	CBE	Core A	925	1983	9.9	3.1	341[c]
		Core E	925	1983	11.8	3.2	46
8	OBE	3 yr LFI	2145	1979	12.0	3.8	145[d]
		EFI	5580	1979	14.9	4.2	53
	CBE	2 yr LFI	1845	1979	12.5	3.8	127[d]
		EFI	5580	1979	16.3	2.7	60

a Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the OBE grade 10G group

b Mean is significantly different from that of the CBE grade 10E group ($p < 0.05$) and from the other grade 10 groups ($p < 0.01$).

c Mean is significantly different from the mean of the other grade 10 core groups ($p < 0.01$).

d Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the CBE grade 10E group.

The OISE-B Reading Test is based on material which would appear in publications intended for an adult French-speaking readership. The vocabulary is sometimes difficult and five of the ten passages are quite lengthy, approximately equivalent to the amount of text on this page. The questions based on the passages are often indirect or essentially ask for an interpretation of what has been read. Adding to the difficulty of some items are the four responses, all of which may be somewhat correct but from which the best answer must be chosen. The test demands a reasonably high level of comprehension and use of standard written material. This level appears not to have been achieved by many of the G level students and by only some of the A level students.

The OISE Level C Cloze Test. A cloze test is essentially a passage taken from another source from which words (usually every seventh) have been removed. To complete the blanks correctly, students must be able to read with understanding, recognize structures of the language and produce required elements of vocabulary. Thus the cloze test includes both reading and writing skills and is felt by some to be a valid measure of overall language proficiency (Lapkin and Swain, 1977).

The cloze test may be marked using different methods. For the exact-scoring method, the testees must give the word used in the original text whereas for the acceptable-scoring method a point is also given for a suitable synonym or another word which makes sense in context. Although the exact-scoring method is slightly more marker-reliable, correlations between the two types of scores have been found to be very high (Valette, pg. 213).

A cloze test prepared by OISE and referred to as level C was given to all E level and approximately one third of the A level classes of grade 10 core French in the Ottawa Board. This test was not administered in 1983 in the Carleton Board. The test was marked using both the exact-scoring and the acceptable-scoring methods. This was done to allow comparisons with a greater number of the groups tested in previous years. The Pearson r correlation coefficients calculated for the two types of scores are 0.95 for 80 level E students and 0.97 for 237 level A students. For these students and this passage it appears that the acceptable-scoring method gives scores roughly two to five points higher than the exact-scoring method. Substitutes for the original words in the text were accepted for 19 of the 50 blank spaces with an average of four alternate words produced for the blanks where any substitute had been allowed. It is doubtful that many of the remaining blanks for which no substitutes had been accepted could be completed by any word except that of the original text.

The results for all the Ottawa and Carleton Board groups which have taken the OISE Level C Cloze Test are given in Table 10. Two scoring methods are reported but, in the following discussion, only mean scores obtained using the same method are compared. It can be seen that the scores of the grade 10 core French students are much lower than those of all the grade 10 and grade 12 immersion groups who have written this cloze test. The differences between the means of the immersion groups with standard deviations reported and the grade 10 core groups are all significant ($p < 0.01$). There is less difference between the scores of the core French students in grade 12 in 1978 with 1085 hours of French instruction and those in grade 10 in 1983 with

1270 hours. Looking at these results in the 'acceptable-word' section of Table 10 it can be seen that the mean scores of the OBE core French groups are ordered in increasing value as follows: grade 12G, grade 10A, grade 12A, grade 10E, grade 12E. The difference between any two mean scores in this series is significant ($p < 0.01$) except that between the two groups of E level students which is not significant.

TABLE 10

OISE LEVEL C CLOZE TEST RESULTS, 1978-1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=50)	SD	N
Exact word method of scoring							
10	OBE	Core A	1270	1983	19.5	6.2	237
		Core E	1270	1983	25.1	5.2	80
	OBE	Bi-hi LFI	3000	1981	29.7	4.6	61
		Bi-hi EFI	6440	1981	33.4	5.2	33
	CBE	LFI cont	2400	1981	31.0	4.7	61
		EFI cont	6110	1981	34.7	3.7	43
12	OBE	Bi-hi LFI	3905	1981	33.5	3.9	31
	CBE	LFI cont	2925	1981	33.4	6.0	18
Acceptable word method of scoring							
10	OBE	Core A	1270	1983	22.2	7.1	237
		Core E	1270	1983	29.1	6.2	80*
12	OBE	Core G	1085	1978	17.6	5.5	66
		Core A	1085	1978	25.4	4.8	103
		Core E	1085	1978	31.1	5.6	52
	OBE	4 yr LFI	2405	1978	35.1	na	18
		5 yr LFI	2735	1978	34.3	na	32

* Mean is not significantly different from the mean of the grade 12E core group. (All other differences between the mean of a grade 10 core group and any other group reported for the same scoring system are significant.)

The OBE French Reading and Writing Test. Since tests of reading and writing suitable for grade 10G core students were not found in the search conducted for this project, the OBE French Reading and Writing Test was developed by the OBE Research Centre. An outline of the test giving a description of the content and marking scheme is included in Working Paper 157 (Wightman, 1984b). The style of items is very similar to that of the material found in the OAIP package for French as a Second Language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1980b).

The first two sections of the test contain the writing components. One of these requires the student to produce five sentences in response to five questions, and the other to write a brief description, about eight to twelve sentences in length, describing events illustrated in some sketches. These two sections are referred to later as 'sentences' and 'story'. The rest of the test was concerned with reading skills. The first three questions in the reading portion were of the multiple-choice type and involved the recognition of conversational phrases appropriate for described social situations. This section is referred to as 'expressions' in the description of the results. The rest of the reading component, later referred to as 'reading', was made up of three passages about which questions were asked. The answers to these questions were very short, often requiring only one or two words, and were to be given in English.

The marking system proposed in the OAIP package was used for the writing portion of the test. Essentially the OAIP system involves selecting for each item the appropriate scoring criteria from the following five categories: information, grammaticality, spelling, appropriateness and discourse. Once the criteria have been selected, the maxi-

mum possible scores and the basis for assigning marks along each scale are set. Before marking the writing with the OAIP framework, a substantial number of completed tests were scanned and then a detailed guide was prepared. The answers to the reading portion of the test were very short and a very simple marking scheme was used which gave one point for each correct piece of information.

The OBE French Reading and Writing Test was administered to about one third of the grade 10G classes taking core French in the Ottawa Board. In the Carleton Board a similar number of G level students took the test as well as some A level and a very few E level students.

Table 11 gives the results on the four parts of the test for the grade 10 core students tested in 1983. On all four parts of the test there are significant differences ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the G, A and E level groups. The two largest groups of students were in G level courses in the Ottawa and Carleton Boards. There are significant differences ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of these two groups on the 'sentences' and 'story' parts of the test but not on the 'expressions' or 'reading' parts. This suggests that the Ottawa grade 10G students, who are in a Core French Program with more instructional hours, have an advantage over their peers in the Carleton Board in writing but not in reading skills.

TABLE 11

OBE FRENCH READING AND WRITING TEST RESULTS
FOR GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Group	N	Sentences (max = 20)		Story (max = 30)		Expressions (max = 3)		Reading (max = 34)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
CBE - G	151	10.6	3.3	10.2	7.0	1.8	0.6*	16.9	4.9*
OBE - G	164	11.8	2.4	13.5	6.8	1.8	0.7	16.6	5.0
CBE - A	86	13.9	3.0	16.7	7.2	2.1	0.6	21.6	4.4
CBE - E	14	16.6	1.6	25.4	2.7	2.7	0.6	28.6	2.8

* The mean is not significantly different from the mean of the OBE 10G group but differences between all other pairs of means within one section of the test are significant ($p < 0.01$).

Since the data for OBE students had been entered into a computer file, a breakdown of the mean scores for each section of the test was obtained for this group and is shown in Table 12. This table is discussed in more detail in Working Paper 157 (Wightman, 1984b) but a few of the observations will be included here. On the writing parts of the test these G level students gained a higher percentage of the maximum score for information than for the other categories; they also appeared to have less difficulty in writing the single sentence answers than in writing a series of sentences for the 'story'. They seemed weakest in the category called 'discourse' which was concerned with the number of appropriately used words of cohesion (such as donc, puisque, etc.) and the coherence of the story being told. Three items composed the 'expressions' section and the students answered two of these very well (83 and 85 per cent correct) but only a few (13 per cent) chose the correct answer for the third, which was the only one involving awareness of the correct grammatical form as well as meaning.

TABLE 12

SUBSCORES ON THE OBE FRENCH READING AND WRITING TEST
FOR OTTAWA GRADE 10 STUDENTS IN GENERAL LEVEL CORE FRENCH, 1983

Variable		Subscore*		Combined score	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sentences					
Information	(max = 10)	6.6	1.9		
Grammar	(max = 5)	2.0	1.0		
Spelling	(max = 5)	3.1	1.0		
Total	(max = 20)			11.8	2.4
Story					
Information	(max = 10)	5.0	2.8		
Grammar	(max = 10)	4.5	2.3		
Spelling	(max = 4)	1.7	0.1		
Discourse	(max = 6)	2.4	1.4		
Total	(max = 30)			13.5	6.8
Expressions				1.8	0.7
Reading					
Advertisement	(max = 9)	4.4	2.8		
Recipe	(max = 18)	10.9	3.7		
Ferry schedule	(max = 7)	1.3	1.4		
Total	(max = 34)			16.6	5.0

* The results are based on 164 students.

On the last three sections of the test involving reading, the individual item responses show the items presented a wide range of difficulty level for this group. In general the items found easiest were those involving the recognition of a fairly common noun in the passage, such as the names of foods. Less common words were not as well known. The last of the three questions posed the greatest difficulty. It involved finding information on a simplified version of a real ferry schedule. The replies showed that many students had not understood the meaning of such common phrases as aller seulement or the presentation of the time in the 24-hour system. Although all three

questions in the reading section were based on commonly used types of written material it appears that the OBE G level students still would have considerably difficulty in using French in such situations.

The OBE French Writing Test. In order to obtain a sample of the writing of A and E level students and to make use of the rest of the testing period in which the 25-minute cloze test was to be administered, a short writing test was assembled by the OBE Research Centre. The OBE French Writing Test is actually composed of only two parts, and one of these is the 'story' on the OBE French Reading and Writing Test. The second part of the writing test involves writing a very informal note to a friend. The scoring of both items was done with the same system used for scoring the 'story' in the OBE French Reading and Writing Test and described on page 32 and in Table 12.

The OBE French Writing Test was given to all the grade 10E classes and about one third of the 10A classes in the Ottawa Board. In the Carleton Board seven classes of A level students wrote the test.

The results for three groups on the two sections of the writing test are given in Table 13. The difference between the mean score of the OBE E level group and that of either A level group is significant ($p < 0.01$) for both parts of the test. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two A level groups on the 'note' but there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores for the same groups on the 'story' with the score of the OBE group being larger.

TABLE 13

OBE FRENCH WRITING TEST RESULTS
FOR GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Board	Group	Number	Story (max=30)		Note (max=30)	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
CBE	Core A	122	16.6	5.9	12.1	7.5
OBE	Core A	237	18.7	4.3*	14.0	7.5
OBE	Core E	80	21.6	3.4#	19.0	6.8#

* Mean is significantly different from the mean of the CBE group ($p < 0.01$).

\# Mean is significantly different from the mean of either A level group ($p < 0.01$).

Because the OBE French Writing Test and the OBE French Reading and Writing Test included the identical 'story' section, the performance of students in both boards at all course levels was measured on this common part of the two tests. The very few E level students in the Carleton Board who wrote this item, however, cannot be assumed to represent all CBE E level students since they were all from one class which appeared to be especially strong. (On the IEA IV Listening Test, 22 students in this class had a mean of 31.5 with SD of 5.5, whereas the mean for all 62 CBE grade 10E students from three classes was 27.1, with SD of 6.4.)

The results on the 'story' section for all the groups tested are shown in Table 14. The column showing the test used indicates that in the case of A level students in the Carleton Board results from both tests were combined to give the mean score reported here. As was seen in other areas there appears to be a clear distinction between the general level of writing skills seen in G, A and E level core French

courses. Within each board there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between any pair of mean scores for the three types of students. Also significant ($p < 0.01$) are the differences between the mean scores of groups from the two boards at the same course level, with the OBE students having higher mean scores at the G and A levels and the CBE students at the E level.

TABLE 14

RESULTS IN WRITING ON THE 'STORY' SECTION INCLUDED IN TWO TESTS GIVEN TO GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Board	Group	No. of cum. hrs.	Test used	% of max score	Mean* (max = 30)	SD	N
CBE	Core G	925	R&W	34	10.2	7.0	151
	Core A		R&W,W	56	16.6	6.5	208
	Core E		R&W	85	25.4	2.7	14
OBE	Core G	1270	R&W	45	13.5	6.8	164
	Core A		W	62	18.7	4.3	237
	Core E		W	72	21.6	3.4	80

* The difference between any two mean scores appearing in this table is significant ($p < 0.01$)

For the results of the writing test in the Ottawa Board, the subscores for each of the criteria used in marking were combined across the two parts of the test. The resulting figures are shown in Table 15. In comparing the columns showing the percentage of the group mean contributed by the various criteria subscores, it is seen that the better performance of the E level students is not concentrated in one of these areas but is spread almost equally across all four marking criteria. There is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the A and E level groups on all the criteria except spelling.

TABLE 15

RESULTS FOR MARKING CRITERIA ON THE OBE FRENCH WRITING TEST FOR OTTAWA GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Criterion		A level students			E level students		
		Mean	SD	% of group mean	Mean	SD	% of group mean
Information	(max = 20)	12.1	3.8	37	14.9*	3.1	37
Grammar	(max = 20)	10.7	3.4	33	13.5*	2.8	33
Spelling	(max = 8)	3.7	1.0	11	4.1	1.1	10
Discourse	(max = 12)	6.2	2.2	19	8.1*	1.9	20
Overall		32.7			40.6		
Number of students		237			80		

* Mean is significantly different from that of the A level group on the same criterion ($p < 0.01$).

Speaking

As as result of the search for instruments which would be suitable for testing the speaking skills of the grade 10 core French students and meet the other objectives of the project, a test was constructed using material from several sources. Its contents, marking strategies and results obtained from testing the grade 10 core French students are outlined in the following section; a more complete description is available in Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984c).

The OBE French Speaking Test, 1983. This test was made up of material drawn from the following sources:

(1) A speaking test developed by the OBE Research Centre in 1980 and used to test core French students in grade 6 and grade 8

(2) An instrument developed by the OBE Research Centre and used to compare students in different types of immersion programs, and

(3) Adaptations of items from OAIP.

The test was divided into three parts identified as Unit 1, 2 and 3 and only one unit was used with each testee. In Table 16 is presented an outline of each unit's components, including the usual identifier found in the tables of this report, the source and the maximum score.

TABLE 16

OUTLINE OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST
GIVEN TO GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Unit	Identifier	Source	Max score
1	Situations 1	Modelled on OAIP items	49
	Structures	OBE Research Centre - parts of a test developed to compare programs of French Immersion	24
	Story Series	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	6
2	Vocabulary 2	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	8
	General Questions	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	32
	Pronunciation	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	30
	Situations 2	Modelled on OAIP items	57
3	Vocabulary 3	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	8
	Word Substitutions	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	32
	Situations 3	Modelled on OAIP items	26
	Street Scene	From Speaking Test for Grades 6 and 8 core French	6

All the sections of the speaking test except those referred to as 'situations' and 'structures' were included in an OBE-developed test administered in 1980 to grade 6 core French students and in 1982 to grade 8. The findings from these two administrations are available in Research Reports (Wightman 1980 and 1982a). A report of the previous use of the items referred to as 'structures', which were used to compare immersion programs, is available as FRENCH Working Paper 150 (Pawley, 1983). A brief description of the type of items in each section of the test is included with the presentation of results in later sections of this report.

An effort was made to apportion the material in the test to the three units so that each would take about the same length of time to administer. Each unit contained some of the OAIP adapted items and some items from the earlier OBE speaking test. Because the items from the instrument used to test immersion students were expected to be quite difficult for the grade 10 core French students, they were all placed in Unit 1 which was then adminstered to only the A and E level students. Units 2 and 3 were administered to A and G level students.

The testing schedule was arranged so that the G, A and E level students were interspersed and each student's course level was not known by either the tester or the scorer. The trained bilingual testers used a cassette recorder to record the students' answers for scoring at a later time.

The parts of the test which had been administered previously were marked in 1983 using the same scoring system so that results could be compared. In the case of the part called 'structures' a second marking system was used as well as the original which was felt to be too severe

for core French students. The section of each unit which was adapted from OAIP and called 'situations' was marked using an OAIP-derived system similar to that described on page 32 for the OBE French Reading and Writing Test.

Overview of the Results. An overview of the results on the speaking test for Ottawa Board students is shown in Table 17 and for Carleton Board students in Table 18. These results are grouped according to the test unit and, within the unit, in the order of presentation to testees. The means, standard deviations and number of students for each part of the test and each course level are given, although significant differences between comparable means are not indicated since they will be dealt with in later sections of the report when each part of the test is discussed.

The results of testing the speaking skills of the grade 10 core French students give several findings which are parallel to those obtained from testing other skills. Again there is a distinction among the G, A and E level students. In comparing the mean scores of students in the same course level from the two boards represented, the groups with more instructional time often have better results, especially on the more challenging parts of the test. On the parts of the test given to both groups, the performances of the grade 10G students are very close to those of the grade 8 core French students. The results indicate that the speaking skills of the A level group are better than those of the grade 8 core students. The E level students demonstrate a general level of proficiency in speaking which is higher again than that of the A level students. The 10E students do not appear to

be as strong as grade 8 late immersion students on the one part of the test for which there were results for students in a program other than core.

In the text which follows, the various parts of the test will be discussed in the following order: vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure (which includes 'general questions' and 'word substitutions'), descr ptive speech (which includes 'story series' and 'street scene'), situational responses and structures.

TABLE 17

RESULTS ON THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST
FOR OTTAWA GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Variable	General			Advanced			Enriched		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Unit 1									
Situations 1 (max = 49)	—	—	—	33.7	8.6	58	40.5	5.1	33
Structures (max = 24)	—	—	—	11.7	4.8	58	16.3	3.0	33
Story Series (max = 6)	—	—	—	3.9	1.2	58	5.0	0.8	33
Unit 2									
Vocabulary 2 (max = 8)	5.2	1.6	35	6.9	1.1	50	—	—	—
General Ques. (max = 32)	17.4	6.5	35	25.6	4.0	50	—	—	—
Reading Pronun. (max = 30)	18.7	3.5	35	24.4	2.8	50	—	—	—
Situations 2 (max = 57)	18.6	12.6	35	36.5	9.8	50	—	—	—
Unit 3									
Vocabulary 3 (max = 8)	6.3	1.4	38	6.8	1.6	49	—	—	—
Word Subst. (max = 32)	17.2	5.3	38	23.7	6.1	49	—	—	—
Situations 3 (max = 26)	10.7	7.2	37	15.7	7.2	49	—	—	—
Street Scene (max = 6)	3.3	1.1	38	4.3	1.4	49	—	—	—

TABLE 18

RESULTS ON THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST
FOR CARLETON GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Variable	General			Advanced			Enriched		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Unit 1									
Situations 1 (max = 49)	—	—	—	28.8	11.9	51	36.4	6.7	16
Structures (max = 24)	—	—	—	8.7	5.6	48	14.6	3.3	15
Story Series (max = 6)	—	—	—	3.3	1.4	51	4.5	1.5	16
Unit 2									
Vocabulary 2 (max = 8)	6.4	1.6	25	7.0	1.0	51	—	—	—
General Ques. (max = 32	17.0	6.3	25	22.0	6.6	50	—	—	—
Reading Pronun. (max = 30)	20.4	3.6	25	23.2	3.4	51	—	—	—
Situations 2 (max = 57)	21.3	12.2	24	33.0	13.4	48	—	—	—
Unit 3									
Vocabulary 3 (max = 8)	6.1	1.6	26	6.9	1.1	50	—	—	—
Subst. of Words (max = 32)	17.5	6.8	25	23.4	5.2	46	—	—	—
Situations 3 (max = 26)	12.3	7.6	25	16.7	6.2	50	—	—	—
Street Scene (max = 6)	3.1	1.3	26	3.7	1.4	50	—	—	—

Vocabulary. Units 2 and 3 of the speaking test each include a section referred to as 'vocabulary' which involves having the students name eight objects shown in one of the two sets of sketches. The words required are all basic vocabulary elements that have appeared in the OBE core French curriculum by the end of grade 6. In marking the vocabulary section, one point is given for each correct noun without consideration of the presence of an article.

Table 19 gives the mean score for each group of students based on the results of both vocabulary sections. In both Ottawa and Carleton Boards, the grade 10 core French students in level A courses named more nouns than did their peers in level G courses (differences between means are significant, $p < 0.01$). On the average the number of the 8 objects named by the A level students was about 7 and by the G level students was about 6. In comparing the results of grade 10 core French students from the two boards there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the A level or the G level groups. Comparing across grade levels there is no significant difference between the mean score of the grade 10G core French students in either board and the grade 6 or grade 8 core students tested in 1980. The A level students in both boards have mean scores which are significantly higher than all the other groups included in Table 19 (differences are significant, $p < 0.01$).

TABLE 19

RESULTS FOR VOCABULARY SECTIONS OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR SEVERAL GROUPS OF CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1980 - 1983

Group		Year	Cum. hrs. of French	Mean (max=8)	SD	N
OBE	grade 6	1980	810	5.7	2.4	169
OBE	grade 8	1982	1050	5.9	1.9	171
OBE	grade 10G	1983	1270	5.7	1.5	73
	grade 10A	1983	1270	6.9	1.4	99*
CBE	grade 10G	1983	925	6.2	1.6	51
	grade 10A	1983	925	6.9	1.1	101*

* The mean is significantly different from the means of the OBE and the CBE grade 10G group, the grade 8 group and the grade 6 group ($p < 0.01$).

Pronunciation. The section of the speaking test on which pronunciation was measured was a passage of about 150 words which was read aloud by the student after being read through silently. Specific sounds in predetermined words were marked as either correct or incorrect for 27 of the 30 possible points. The other 3 points were given on the basis of the intonation and expression in reading. This part of the speaking test appeared in Unit 2, which was used with both G and A level students.

The results for these students, as well as for grade 6 and grade 8 core students, are given in Table 20. The mean scores increase from grade 6 to grade 8 and from grade 8 to grade 10A, with a significant difference between all pairs from two grade levels ($p < 0.01$). In both boards there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the grade 10G and grade 10A groups. The mean score of the OBE grade 10G group is not significantly different from that of the grade 8 or the grade 6 group. The mean scores of the CBE grade 10G group is not significantly different from the grade 8 group but there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the CBE grade 10G group and the grade 6 group. In comparing mean scores of groups in the same course level across boards no significant differences are found.

TABLE 20

RESULTS IN PRONUNCIATION ON THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR SEVERAL GROUPS OF CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1980 - 1983

Group	Year	Cum. hrs. of French	Mean (max = 30)	SD	N
OBE grade 6	1980	810	16.9	5.5	84[a]
OBE grade 8	1982	1050	19.7	4.7	85
OBE grade 10G	1983	1270	18.7	3.5	35[b]
grade 10A	1983	1270	24.4	2.8	50[a]
CBE grade 10G	1983	925	20.4	3.6	25[b,c]
grade 10A	1983	925	23.2	3.4	51[a]

a The mean is significantly different from the mean of the grade 8 group ($p < 0.01$).

b The mean is significantly different from the mean of the other grade 10 core French group in the same board ($p < 0.01$).

c The mean is significantly different from the mean of the grade 6 group ($p < 0.01$).

The percentage of correct responses on every sound evaluated for each of the four OBE groups reported in Table 20 is available in Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984a). In general, the relative size of these percentages for any of the sounds across the four groups is very similar to their respective mean scores. An exception to this pattern, however, occurs with the three points given for intonation and expression where the grade 10G students have the lowest score of 1.1 followed by the grade 6 students with 1.3, the grade 8 students with 1.5 and the grade 10A students with 1.7.

Sentence Structure. In two sections of the speaking test previously used in grade 6 and 8 core French testing an attempt was made to measure the students' ability to construct sentences without errors. A

group of eight items occurring in Unit 2 and labelled 'general questions' allowed the tester to ask about name, age, country, weather and other common conversational topics. The responses were scored for grammatical accuracy and appropriate vocabulary. A scale of zero to four was used along with a very detailed guide showing the mark for most responses encountered. The same guide was used for each year of testing so that scores from different years could be compared. The second section measuring accurate sentence structure was included in Unit 3 and was referred to as 'word substitution'. Again eight items were involved with the tester giving a short sentence followed by a word which the testee would then substitute in the given sentence. Marks between zero and four for each sentence were awarded on the basis of substituting in the correct position in the sentence and making all the necessary changes, such as agreement of gender and number. For this section, too, a detailed guide was used to ensure consistency in marking.

The results of these two sections of the speaking test involving sentence structure are shown in Table 21. In comparing the results of students in grade 6, grade 8 and the grade 10A, significant differences ($p < 0.01$) are found between each of these groups for both sections of the test. The grade 10G students in both boards have attained mean scores in both sections which are not significantly different from those of the grade 8 students. In the 'general questions', only, there is no significant difference between the mean score of the grade 10G students in either board and the grade 6 students. There are significant differences ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the A and G groups of grade 10 students in both boards for both measures in Table

21. The differences between corresponding scores of students in the same level of core French but in different boards are not significant except for the A level students on the 'general questions', where the OBE group has a higher score. The standard deviations of the grade 10G students are somewhat smaller than those of the grade 8 students, indicating less diversity in the marks given for the responses of the grade 10G group.

TABLE 21

RESULTS FOR THE SENTENCE STRUCTURE SECTIONS OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR SEVERAL GROUPS OF CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1980 - 1983

Group	General Questions (max = 32)			Word Substitutions (max = 32)		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
OBE grade 6 1980	15.2	8.1	84	12.6	6.6	85[d]
OBE grade 8 1982	18.6	7.5	85[a]	16.3	7.9	86[a]
OBE grade 10G 1983	17.4	6.5	35[b]	17.2	5.3	38[b]
grade 10A 1983	25.6	4.0	50[c]	23.7	6.1	49
CBE grade 10G 1983	17.0	6.3	25[b]	17.5	6.8	25[b]
grade 10A 1983	22.0	6.6	50	23.4	5.2	46

a The mean is significantly different from that of the grade 6 group and the two grade 10A groups ($p < 0.01$).

b The mean is significantly different from that of the grade 10A group in the same board ($p < 0.01$).

c The mean is significantly different from that of the grade 10 group at the same course level in the other board ($p < 0.01$).

d The mean is significantly different from that of the grade 10G group in either board ($p < 0.01$).

A tally of the number of responses for each point in the marking scale for all the items in 'general questions' and 'word substitutions' had been prepared for the grade 6 and grade 8 groups and this was re-

peated for the two levels of grade 10 students from the Ottawa Board tested in 1983. These tables are available in Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984c) where they provide the basis for a discussion of some of the responses and differences in the performances of the four OBE groups tested.

Descriptive Speech. Two sections of the speaking test involved having students give a description using their own choice of language. One of these sections, referred to as 'story series' and occuring in Unit 1, is a sequence of four sketches which illustrate a simple story. The other section, 'street scene', is found in Unit 3 and involves having students describe what they see in a sketch of a busy street corner. There is a slight difference in the administration of these two sections in that the tester is allowed to prompt or encourage the student to continue by asking questions for the 'street scene', whereas this is not done for the 'story series'.

The two sections of the test measuring descriptive speech were scored using the same seven-point scale which had been devised for the first administration of the test to grade 6 students in 1980 and used again for grade 8 students in 1982. Unlike the other marking schemes, however, the standard against which students were measured varied somewhat in marking the grade 6, grade 8 and grade 10 groups. That is, although the same descriptions could be applied to each level of the marking scale in all years, the person who scored the test on each occasion felt the type of observations made by the students did change with age and attempted to use as a standard the speech typical of an age peer whose first language was French.

The results for all the groups of students who have been given these sections of the test are shown in Table 22. Since the 'story series' was part of Unit 1 of the test it was given to grade 10 students in A and E level courses. Within both boards the E level students have a higher mean score (differences are significant, $p < 0.01$) than the A level students who, in turn, have a higher mean score (differences are significant; $p < 0.01$ for OBE, $p < 0.05$ for CBE) than the grade 8 students. There is no significant difference between the means of grade 6 and 8 students on this section.

The 'street scene' item was given to G and A level students since it was part of Unit 3 of the speaking test. There is less separation between the groups on this section with no significant differences existing between the mean scores of the grade 6, grade 8 and the two grade 10G groups. The mean scores of the A and G level groups of grade 10 students are significantly different in the Ottawa Board ($p < 0.01$) but not in the Carleton Board. The differences between the mean of the grade 8 group and those of the grade 10A groups in both boards are significant (for OBE, $p < 0.01$; for CBE, $p < 0.05$). For both sections of the test measuring descriptive speech the grade 10A groups in the Ottawa Board have mean scores which are significantly higher than those of the corresponding Carleton Board students ($p < 0.05$).

TABLE 22

RESULTS FOR THE DESCRIPTIVE SPEECH SECTIONS OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR SEVERAL GROUPS OF CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1980 - 1983

Group	Story Series, Unit 1 (max = 6)			Street Scene, Unit 3 (max = 6)		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
OBE grade 6 1980	2.3	1.4	79	3.0	1.4	85
OBE grade 8 1982	2.7	1.7	81[a]	3.1	1.4	86[a]
OBE grade 10G 1983	-	-	—	3.3	1.1	38[b]
grade 10A 1983	3.9	1.2	58	4.3	1.4	49[c]
grade 10E 1983	5.0	0.8	33[b]	-	-	—
CBE grade 10G 1983	-	-	—	3.1	1.3	26
grade 10A 1983	3.3	1.4	51[c]	3.7	1.4	50
grade 10E 1983	4.5	1.5	16[b]	-	-	—

a The mean is significantly different from the mean of the grade 10A group ($p < 0.01$ for OBE; $p < 0.05$ for CBE).

b The mean is significantly different from the mean of the A level group in the same board ($p < 0.01$).

c The mean is significantly different from the mean of the grade 10 level A group in the other board ($p < 0.05$).

In comparing scores of groups at the same level across these two sections of the test it appears that the 'street scene' means are consistently higher than the 'story series' although the differences are not significant for the grade 10A groups. The two items did differ in that the tester was instructed to prompt students for more description if necessary for the 'street scene'. Also, the 'story series' was more limiting in that a particular story with a fairly specific vocabulary was expected to be told, whereas the 'street scene' had a wide variety of activities and objects which could be described.

The distribution of marks over the seven-point scale used in marking descriptive speech was prepared for the grade 6, 8 and 10 students tested in the Ottawa Board and is reported Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984c). This information for the OBE grade 10 groups on both sections of the test is given in Table 23. Included in the table is a brief description of the characteristics of speech at each level of the scale and, at the bottom, the mean score for each of the four groups. It can be seen in Table 23 that there is considerable overlap in the performance levels of individuals in the G, A and E level groups. For instance, a rating of 4, which is characterized by interrupted speech, grammatical errors and limited vocabulary, was given to 42 per cent of the G students, to 22 and 31 per cent of the two groups of A students and to 27 per cent of the E students. This rating was close to the top of the range of scores given to the G level group with 89 per cent of the students receiving either a 2, 3 or 4 rating. The score of 4 is the lowest given to E level students whose scores ranged from 4 to 6 on the rating scale. Of this group 30 per cent received 6 so that they were judged to respond as well as would a student whose first language was French.

TABLE 23

RESULTS FOR EACH RATING USED IN MARKING DESCRIPTIVE SPEECH FOR OTTAWA GRADE 10 CORE STUDENTS, 1983

Rating	Description	Per cent of group with rating			
		Street scene		Story series	
		G	A	A	E
6	Natural speech, full description	0	22	9	30
5	A few errors, hesitation and rephrasing	8	29	24	43
4	Interrupted speech, grammatical errors and limited vocabulary	42	22	31	27
3	Haltingly produced sentences, frequent errors	32	14	26	0
2	Slow erratic speech, attempt to produce sentences	13	8	7	0
1	A few words and phrases understood	3	4	3	0
0	No relevant information given	0	0	0	0
NR	No response	3	0	0	0
Mean rating		3.3	4.3	3.9	5.0
Number of cases		38	49	58	33

Situational Responses. The next parts of the speaking test to be discussed are those sections which were modelled on OAIP items and referred to as 'situations' in Tables 17 and 18. For this section the student is asked to give a complete sentence in response to a question asked by the tester. Two items involve having the students describe the meaning of a word following the style of a given example. For seven items the student is required to make a statement which would be appropriate for someone in the situation described by the tester, such

as looking for something or ordering a meal. The directions for this second type of item are given either in English or in French, and in two cases an item was translated to give a version in both languages in different test units.

These OAIP-like items were distributed unevenly among the three units of the test and many appeared twice. There were six items in Unit 1, seven items in Unit 2 and three items in Unit 3. The reason for the uneven distribution was the need to balance the estimated length of time required for each unit.

The situational response items were marked using a system suggested by OAIP which is similar to that used for the marking of the writing items and has been described earlier in this report. A set of criteria, each with a maximum score, was established for each item. The four criteria adapted from OAIP for these items were information, grammaticality, pronunciation and appropriateness. A fifth criterion, comprehension, was added for the items presented in French.

Since this section of the speaking test was administered for the first time in 1983, results are available only for the grade 10 core French students tested in the Ottawa and Carleton Boards. The means and standard deviations of the individual total scores for the 'situations' section in each unit of the speaking test are given in Table 24.

In comparing the means of the two levels of students in the same board that have been rated on the same part of the test, it can be seen that in every case there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$). That is, as in many other instances, there is a distinction between the G, A and E level groups. Students in the same course level who had been

tested on the same unit of the test were compared across the two boards and it was found that the differences between the means were significant ($p < 0.05$) for the E level students and for the A level students who took Unit 1. In both cases the higher mean was that of the OBE group. The differences between the other four pairs of means were not significant. The results for each group on the items making up this section of the test are reported and discussed in Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984c).

TABLE 24

RESULTS ON THE SITUATIONAL RESPONSE SECTIONS OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS, 1983

Board	General			Advanced			Enriched		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Unit 1 (max=49)									
CBE	—	—	—	28.8*#	11.9	51	36.4#	6.7	16
OBE	—	—	—	33.7*	8.6	58	40.5	5.1	33
Unit 2 (max=57)									
CBE	21.3*	12.2	24	33.0	13.4	48	—	-	—
OBE	18.6*	12.6	35	36.5	9.8	50	—	-	—
Unit 3 (max=26)									
CBE	12.3*	7.6	25	16.7	6.2	50	—	-	—
OBE	10.7*	7.2	37	15.7	7.2	49	—	-	—

* The mean is significantly different from the mean of the group at the same board in a different course level ($p < 0.01$).

\# The mean is significantly different from the mean of the group in the same course level at the other board ($p < 0.05$).

Structures. This section of the speaking test consisted of a series of questions given in French by the tester. Each question or item was designed so that a particular grammatical structure or choice

of words would have to be used in the answer. The 12 items were drawn from a larger bank of 23 items which had been used by the OBE Research Centre in 1982 to test for differences among groups of immersion students in the oral production of particular grammatical structures. In general, the items of the original test chosen to be used in 1983 were those found to be the least difficult for the immersion students. The exceptions to this are the last two items which were added to try another strategy to have students produce particular grammatical structures which had been given very infrequently by the immersion students. (The results showed that, while the 1983 strategy was somewhat more successful, the highest group mean on either item was still only 27 per cent of the maximum possible score, so that the scores on these two items had very little effect on the group means for this section.)

Because this section was expected to be quite demanding for grade 10 core French students a dual marking system was used. One set of scores felt to be appropriate for the core French students was based on giving two points for the correct response and one point for a partially correct response. A second set of scores was obtained for each student based on a more severe marking scheme which allows fewer partially correct responses but which was used for immersion students in 1982.

In Table 25 the mean scores on the 12 items in the 1983 test, obtained using the second scoring system, are given for groups tested in both 1983 and 1982. Since these were calculated for the 1982 tested groups from item response data, standard deviations are unavailable and significance testing involving these means based on the Student's t distribution cannot be performed. The number of hours of French instruction for the immersion groups is taken from the working paper written about the use of these items in 1982 (Pawley, 1983).

Among the grade 10 core French students in either board there is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the mean scores of the E and A level students. Groups taking the same level of core French in different boards have mean scores which are significantly different ($p < 0.05$ for A level, $p < 0.01$ for E level) with the OBE groups scoring higher. Disregarding significance levels, it can be seen in Table 25 that none of the groups of grade 10 Core French students has a mean score as high as the lowest scoring group of immersion students, those in grade 8 of the late-entry program. The results on each item in this section of the speaking test are presented and discussed in Working Paper 158 (Wightman, 1984c).

TABLE 25

RESULTS ON THE STRUCTURES SECTION OF THE OBE FRENCH SPEAKING TEST FOR SEVERAL GROUPS OF STUDENTS, 1982 - 1983

Grade	Board	Program	Cum. hrs. of French	Year	Mean (max=24)	SD	N
8	OBE	EFI	5580	1982	14.1	na	42
		LFI	2520	1982	13.2	na	33
	CBE	EFI	5400	1982	13.8	na	58
		LFI	1910	1982	13.4	na	55
10	OBE	EFI	6480	1982	15.1	na	30
		LFI	3420	1982	14.5	na	29
	CBE	EFI	6160	1982	16.3	na	18
		LFI	2450	1982	15.7	na	29
10	OBE	Core A	1270	1983	7.8*	4.4	58
		Core E	1270	1983	12.5#	3.9	33
	CBE	Core A	925	1983	6.0#	4.3	48
		Core E	925	1983	9.4*	3.1	15

* The mean is significantly different from the mean of the other core French group in the same board ($p < 0.01$).

\# The mean is significantly different from the mean of the core French group at the same level in the other board ($p < 0.05$ for A level, $p < 0.01$ for E level).

Sex Differences

The test results of grade 10 core French students in the Ottawa Board were grouped by sex and then the differences in mean scores were tested for significance. This was not done for the Carleton Board results since computerized data files had not been prepared. Each section of the speaking test was considered separately for these comparisons and the results of the OBE French Reading and Writing Test for G level students were separated to give a mean for reading and for writing.

The results of comparing the girls' and boys' mean scores show that, for the G level students, there are only two pairs which differ signficantly. The most pronounced difference ($p < 0.01$) is on the writing section of the OBE French Reading and Writing Test where the girls' score is higher. A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) also exists in the pronunciation section of the speaking test, where the boys' mean score is higher. There is no significant difference between the mean scores for each sex with A level students. In the groups tested at the E level there were many more girls than boys but the boys' scores are higher in three areas related to very different skills. Significant differences ($p < 0.01$) are found in the means for the IEA IV French Listening Test and the section of the speaking test called 'situations'. The mean scores of the Cloze Test obtained using the exact word method of scoring are also significantly different ($p < 0.05$) but the difference between means obtained using the acceptable word method is not significant.

The overall impression gained from examining sex-related differences is that neither sex consistently performs at a higher level in the grade 10 core French programs. Other examinations of sex differences in French programs have usually found that in some areas girls are stronger than boys and that rarely is the reverse true. However, in many cases where the girls have shown higher perfomance levels, the French program was taken by all students rather than being optional as it is for the grade 10 core French students tested in 1983. In this case it does appear that at the G level the girls may be somewhat stronger overall in writing. The occurrence of a higher score for boys in pronunciation with this group may possibly be due to the boys getting more exposure to French outside the classroom. No sex differences were found in pronunciation with grade 6 and grade 8 core students (Wightman, 1980, 1982b) who took French as part of their prescribed program rather than as an option. The higher scores and lower numbers of boys in the E level suggest that this course level may be attracting boys who are particularly strong in French.

Background in French

As mentioned earlier in the report, the grade 10 core French students in the Ottawa Board were grouped according to the extent of their experience in French. The five background groups considered in this section are described more fully in terms of their contact with French in Table 4 on page 14. In the preliminary stage of assigning students to one of the thirteen categories, also outlined in Table 4, the information given by the student about the type and extent of experience in French and the number of hours of French instruction reported to be on

the student's record were both considered. In more than half the questionnaires the information from these two sources did not agree. Of all the questionnaires completed by OBE students, 44 per cent showed sufficient agreement between the students' information and the school record to assign the same category, 7 per cent were almost in agreement, 46 per cent did not agree at all and 3 per cent were not completed. Persons familiar with the programs and school records made an effort to resolve the conflicting information and to assign categories whenever possible. In cases where they had no reason to believe one conflicting bit of information to be more correct than another, the students were placed in category 13 along with students for whom no information was available. For these reasons there is some doubt as to the absolute accuracy of the categories assigned. Many of the inaccuracies would have disappeared in collapsing the categories into broader groups, but there is still some doubt that the background data are completely reliable.

The percentage of G, A or E level students in each of the five background groups is shown in Table 26. The figures are based on the 1171 OBE students who took at least one of the tests given in the project in 1983. If the figures for groups 3 and 4 in the table are combined, it can be seen that the percentage of students who are known to have had most of their experience in the core program is 64 for G level, 56 for A level and 45 for E level. On the other hand, the percentage of students in groups 1 and 2 who have had more extensive exposure to French is 17 for G level students, 28 for A level and 42 for E level. (The difference between the proportions of students with the two types of experience over the three course levels is significant, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2 = 28.94$.)

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 10 STUDENTS IN BACKGROUND GROUPS FOR GENERAL, ADVANCED AND ENRICHED CORE FRENCH COURSES, SPRING 1983

Group	Course level		
	General	Advanced	Enriched
1. Extra French	7	11	11
2. Immersion experience	10	17	31
3. 8-11 years core	49	41	35
4. 2-7 years core	15	15	10
5. Unknown	19	16	14
N	399	678	94

Mean scores were obtained for each of the five background groups on all the group tests. This was not done for the speaking test since a relatively small number of students at one course level took any one of the three units of the test. Table 27 gives the mean scores on the group tests for the four groups of the grade 10A students with identified language backgrounds. Corresponding information for the smaller groups of level G and E students is available in Working Papers 156 and 157 (Wightman, 1984a and 1984b).

In examining the mean scores in Table 27 for significant differences the following relationships were observed. The differences between the mean scores of the two groups with extra experience in French, that is groups 1 and 2, are not significant for any of the tests considered. The only test for which a significant difference was found between the scores of the two types of core French students was the IEA IV listening test, which was given to a larger number of students. (Of the 104 group 4 advanced students who responded to the students' questionnaire, 65 entered core in grades 4 or 5, 27 in grades 6 or 7 and 12 in grade 8 or 9.)

TABLE 27

RESULTS BY BACKGROUND FOR OTTAWA GRADE 10 STUDENTS
IN ADVANCED CORE FRENCH COURSES, SPRING 1983

Variable		Background Group	Mean	SD	N
OBE L.C.	1	Extra French	47.9	6.0	27[a]
	2	Immersion experience	44.6	6.6	32
	3	8-11 years core	40.8	6.0	78[b]
	4	2-7 years core	40.2	5.9	34
IEA IV L.C.	1	Extra French	29.3	7.3	23[a]
	2	Immersion experience	25.6	6.3	31
	3	8-11 years core	21.4	5.5	81
	4	2-7 years core	18.6	8.0	30
OISE-B Reading	1	Extra French	12.0	3.6	75[a]
	2	Immersion experience	12.3	3.5	113
	3	8-11 years core	10.2	3.2	275[b]
	4	2-7 years core	9.9	3.5	104
Cloze - exact	1	Extra French	20.7	6.7	19[c]
	2	Immersion experience	21.9	6.6	47[a]
	3	8-11 years core	18.4	6.4	102[b]
	4	2-7 years core	18.1	5.3	36
Cloze-acceptable	1	Extra French	23.8	8.5	19[c]
	2	Immersion experience	24.9	7.5	47[a]
	3	8-11 years core	21.0	7.1	102[b]
	4	2-7 years core	20.5	5.9	36
OBE Writing	1	Extra French	33.8	9.8	19[c]
	2	Immersion experience	36.1	9.0	47[a]
	3	8-11 years core	32.0	9.6	102[b]
	4	2-7 years core	29.8	8.8	36

The differences between all means for any test are significant unless indicated otherwise ($p < 0.05$).

a No significant difference between the means of groups 1 and 2.

b No significant difference between the means of groups 3 and 4.

c No significant difference between the means of groups 1 and 3 or the means of groups 1 and 4.

Students who had been in French immersion programs or had other types of experience outside the Core program performed better than either of the groups with only core French on the two tests of listening and the OISE-B reading test. On the Cloze Test and the OBE Writing Test the former immersion students in group 2 had scores which were higher than either group of core French students but there were no significant differences between the means of the core French groups and the group which had received supplementary experience in French other than immersion. Based on the results of all the tests it would seem that generally the students who have been late in entering the core program but who have opted to enroll at the A level in grade 10 now have skills which are as well developed as their peers who have taken the full program.

The mean score of the group which had taken at least eight years of the Core French Program was compared with the mean score of all the grade 10A students who had written each test. Although the total group had a higher score on all the tests, the difference was significant ($p < 0.05$) only in the case of the OISE-B Reading Test. This indicates that the performance of all the students in the OBE grade 10A courses is probably slightly although not usually significantly better than the performance of the students who have taken only core French for eight or more years.

SUMMARY

Findings

Maintained consistently throughout the results of testing grade 10 core French students is the substantial separation between the G, A and E level groups. On several measures there is also a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of comparable groups from the two boards involved in the study, always in favour of the board with the greater number of instructional hours. For example, the OBE students have a higher mean score than the CBE students, at the G level, for the writing part of the OBE French Reading and Writing Test and, at the E level, for the 'situations' and 'structures' part of the speaking test. More data are available for such a comparison at the A level and here the OBE mean scores are higher on the IEA IV listening test, the OISE-B reading test, the 'story' section of the OBE French Writing Test and in the 'story series', 'street scene', 'general questions', 'situations' and 'structures' parts of the speaking test.

In comparing the results of grade 10 core French students to other groups the relationships vary somewhat with the instrument considered and an outline of the main findings is presented in Table 28. The performance of the OBE G level core students on the OBE French Comprehension test is quite similar to that of core students in grade 8 where all students are grouped together. Similar results were obtained for many parts of the speaking test. On the frequently-used IEA IV listening test the OBE G level students have larger scores than the grade 8 core group and score at the same level as grade 7 students in a one-year LFI program and grade 3 students in a French school.

TABLE 28

SUMMARY OF MEAN SCORE COMPARISONS BETWEEN GRADE 10 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS*
IN GENERAL, ADVANCED AND ENRICHED LEVEL COURSES AND OTHER STUDENT GROUPS

Test	G Level	A Level	E Level
OBE French Listening Test	#OBE 10G, OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs) CBE 10G< OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs)	OBE 10A > OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs) CBE 10A > OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs)	
IEA II Listening Test	OBE 10G > OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs) OBE 10G > CBE gr 8 core (705 hrs) #OBE 10G, OBE gr 7 LFI 1 yr (855 hrs)		
IEA IV Listening Test		CBE 10A < OBE gr 7 LFI 2 yr (1795 hrs) #OBE 10A, OBE gr 7 LFI 2 yr (1795 hrs)	#CBE 10E, OBE gr 8 LFI 2 yr (1855 hrs) #CBE 10E, OBE gr 8 LFI 3 yr (2145 hrs) #CBE 10E, CBE gr 8 LFI 2 yr (1845 hrs) #OBE 10E, CBE gr 8 LFI 2 yr (1845 hrs) #OBE 10E, OBE 12A (1085 hrs) #OBE 10E, OBE gr 9 bi-hi (1415 hrs)
OISE-B Reading	#OBE 10G, Peel gr 11 core (480 hrs) #OBE 10G, Peel gr 12 core (600 hrs)	CBE 10A, OBE 10A < CBE gr 8 LFI 2 yr (1845 hrs), CBE gr 8 LFI 3 yr (2145 hrs)	#CBE 10E, OBE gr 8 LFI 3 yr (2145 hrs) #CBE 10E, CBE gr 8 LFI 2 yr (1845 hrs)
Cloze		OBE 10A > OBE 12G core (1085 hrs) OBE 10A < OBE 12A core (1085 hrs)	OBE 10E > OBE 12A core (1085 hrs) #OBE 10E, OBE 12E core (1085 hrs)
Sections of Speaking Test given to grades 6 and 8 core	#OBE 10G, OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs) #CBE 10G, OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs)	OBE 10A > OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs) CBE 10A > OBE gr 8 core (1050 hrs)	
Speaking Test 'structures' given to grades 8 and 10 immersion		OBE 10A, CBE 10A < OBE gr 8 LFI (2520 hrs), CBE gr 8 LFI (1910 hrs) (no significance test)	OBE 10E < OBE gr 8 LFI (2520 hrs) OBE 10E < CBE gr 8 LFI (1910 hrs) (no significance test)

* The grade 10 core French students in OBE have accumulated 1210 hours of instruction by the end of the grade, and in CBE, 925 hours.

\# No significant difference was found between the means of these two groups.

One group of grade 10A students has a mean score which is not statistically different from the grade 7 LFI students in two-year programs on the IEA IV listening comprehension test, but it did not reach the level of the grade 8 LFI students on the OISE-B reading test. Both grade 10A groups performed better than the grade 8 core students on the OBE listening test and on most parts of the speaking test. They did not score as high as a grade 12A group on the cloze test.

The grade 10E students had a mean score on the IEA IV listening test that was not statistically different from the mean scores for students in grade 12A core French and in grade 9 bilingual and grade 8 two-year LFI programs. The same grade 8 LFI students and the grade 10E students also performed at about the same level on the OISE-B Reading Test.

Very few differences were noted in the results for each sex except at the E level where the smaller number of boys had higher scores on some measures. The information collected about the language background of students indicates that the G, A and E level groups are quite different from each other in this respect and that students with extra experience in French outside the core program do appear to have better language skills.

Concluding Statement

The extensive testing carried out in this project has provided information about the language skills of grade 10 core French students in three course levels. The data have allowed comparisons to be made to other groups of core students and to immersion students. It is anticipated that further uses of these data will be made as other cohorts of

students are tested, especially those who have followed other program variations or have been influenced by recent changes in Ontario Ministry of Education regulations making a French course compulsory in high school. The knowledge gained in this project about the suitability of a large number of instruments for the types of students tested will provide guidance in any future testing in related areas.

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APPENDIX

List of Working Papers

List of Working Papers

146 Grade 12 Student Survey: Year Two, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

147 The Ottawa High School Bilingual Program: Views of Two Groups of Graduates

148 Test of French Reading and Language Usage (Test de français), Grades 8 to 12 Bilingual-Program Groups, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

149 French Writing Test: Grade 10 Bilingual-Program Groups, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

150 French Speaking Test (Structures), Grades 8 and 10 Bilingual-Program Groups, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

151 French Interview Test, Grade 12 Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

152 French Listening Comprehension Test, Grades 9 and 11 Bilingual-Program Groups, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982

153 Subjects Taught in French: Grade 9 Advanced Mathematics, Ottawa, 1983

154 Subjects Taught in French: Grade 9 Advanced Geography, Ottawa, 1983

155 Subjects Taught in French: Grade 10 Advanced History, Ottawa, 1983

156 Listening Skills of Grade 10 Core French Students Tested in Spring, 1983

157 Reading and Writing Skills of Grade 10 Core French Students Tested in Spring, 1983

158 Speaking Skills of Grade 10 Core French Students Tested in Spring, 1983